

### Nomads of Tibet Service Learning Trip



**The team at TreeHouse Learning Community and The Pureland Project are excited to once again host this clean and sober trip for college students and friends of TreeHouse interested in an extraordinary journey led by highly qualified guides into one of the most fascinating cultures on the earth.. Every aspect of this trip will inspire you.**

**Tour:** Travel Overland from the Food Capital of China, Chengdu, through some of the most beautiful landscapes and diverse cultural areas into the Tibetan Plateau. We will land in the village of GarGon, where we will stay to offer some service work and learn from Tibetan Nomads.

**Dates:** May 16th to June 1st, 2017 (17 days)

**Price \$2,600** \*There will be a 3% processing fee for PayPal & credit card.

**\*Additional personal expenses:** RT Airfare to Chengdu, China (CTU)) China from SFO/LAX approx. \$1,100 + Chinese Visa \$130 + Personal travel Insurance (1 month) \$80 + Spending Money \$300

**Trip Leaders:** Margaret "Meg" Ferrigno PhD founder and Executive Director of the Pureland Project. Molly McGinn PhD Managing Partner, TreeHouse Learning Community , Meg voluntarily organizes the tours to raise funds for Garchen Rinpoche's village school projects which she manages under the Pureland Project. Meg speaks Tibetan and spent several years in Tibet at Gargon. Molly is the co-founder of TreeHouse Learning Community in Prescott and Tempe. She is in long term recovery, has her doctorate in Anthropology and did some of her fieldwork in Tibet. She taught at the Academy of Science in Chengdu for a year in the 80's before working in Tibet.

**The Trip to Tibet:** The area of Tibet we will journey to is known as Kham. It is considered the wild west of Tibet, inhabited mostly by nomads. The rugged mountains are not hospitable to any other way of life. Tours to the region are quite rare, yet as roads are being built, the area is seeing rapid change. This trip is not only to share the precious wisdom of Tibet and expose people to its sacred spirit, but also to show the Tibetans how valued and respected their culture is by the outside world.

We will engage the Navajo and Tibetan and Recovery communities in conversations on resiliency in terms of cultural and environmental and spiritual sustainability for recovery in many forms. We will begin the tour in Chengdu in Sichuan Province of China. Chengdu a culturally rich and diverse city in the Western region of China. We will be meeting with college students at the Minorities College there to speak about the issues of cultural sustainability and how the Tibetan situation relates to issues facing Native Americans. From Chengdu we will fly up to Yushu in Qinghai and travel by van to Nangchen, Kham. We will stop in Yushu to see Tibetan resilience in action and observe how the city is rebuilding from a devastating earthquake in 2009.

Our time in Nangchen will be spent primarily at the Monastery of Gargon and in Gargon village with the school communities. We will do yoga and learning traditional crafts and helping students create

exports that will support their schools in the future. Every day will begin with Tibetan lessons, and end with a 12 step meeting or "circle". During the day our adventures will range from hikes into the mountains, to tours through historic monasteries. From Gargon we will head back to Chengdu via Yushu. We will have a final celebration dinner in Chengdu before boarding our flights back to the US on June 1st. Most students will be returning to Prescott for summer school while others will be heading for home visits.

**Air Travel:** We will work with students and parents to select flights May 16th to arrive in Chengdu on May 17th. Molly and the TreeHouse team will be flying together or in small groups starting either from Prescott/Phoenix or from San Francisco. Some students may be coming from a home visit and meet in San Francisco. Participants will arrive in Chengdu, China (CTU) on May 17th and to depart Chengdu, China on June 1st.

**Deadlines:** A \$500 deposit will be due to the Pureland Project by March 11 to hold your spot. Final payments of \$2,100 will be due on March 31<sup>st</sup>. This trip is limited to 10 students

**Requirements:** Students and leader and any participants must be drug and alcohol free and abstain from any and all use of mind altering substances. All participants will be given a portfolio of 10-12 articles to read that cover the foundational aspects of the culture, history and politics of Tibet.

### **Detailed Itinerary**

#### **May 17th meet in Chengdu**

We will pick you up at the Chengdu Airport. We will stay two nights to rest in a great little youth hostel where you can connect with other travelers and explore this city. Readings will be provided for participants to complete before their arrival.

#### **May 18-Chengdu**

We will take the day to explore Chengdu and experience the different cultures that live here. Attend Talk by Native American group leader and students accompanied by documentary film. Attend talk by Tibetan professor and be part of a panel discussion on cultural sustainability. Evening time sharing or cultural songs and dances.

#### **May 19- 22 Drive from Chengdu to Gargon**

After a chinese breakfast, we will Begin our drive to Yushu (Jeykundo-Tib.)

<http://www.platauperspectives.org/yushu.htm> . Jeykundo is a fabulous little town where we will overnight. This district center was leveled by an earthquake in April of 2009. We will take an hour to do khoras- circumambulation of some holy sites in Yushu and learn about the history of the region.

#### **May 22 Yushu to Nangchen to GarGon**

We will then depart for our 4 hour drive to Nangchen (Sharda- Chin) <http://www.nangchen.org/> , where we will have lunch and take a stroll through the town some have likened to the wild west! The next four hours in the jeep will be incredibly scenic as we leave the beaten path and enter the truly nomadic regions of the borderlands. We will reach the monastery in time for dinner, meeting some of the community with whom we will spend the next week of study. . <http://thepurelandproject.blogspot.com/>

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#### **May 23-29 Morning meditation (<http://www.dhamma.org/>) and yoga (<http://www.anusara.com/>)**

will be offered for 2 hours each morning for the remainder of the trip. Breakfast will be followed by a hour long Tibetan language class. We will spend our days hiking and working with the village children to help them learn English. We will be working on greenhouse projects with the local villagers and learning from a skilled agriculturalist about high altitude growing and harvesting techniques. During this time we will stay in the lower monastery, taking hikes to different sites. These is one of the most exotic and remote cultural experiences possible for young Westerners.

#### **May 30th GarGon to Yushu**

We will say our goodbyes in the morning and drive to Nangchen for lunch and make it to Yushu for dinner. Students can explore town and take hot showers.

#### **May 31st flight Yushu to Chengdu and final dinner celebration.**

We will enjoy our last night together over hot pot. We will have a closing circle and reflect on the big

experience we will certainly have had.

**June 1st** Those who are headed back to the states will be taken to the airport for their flights back and those who have arranged to stay on and travel in Tibet or other areas of China may continue on from Chengdu

**Expectations and Conditions:** This trip includes 4 days on the road. In order to reach the monastery of Gargon, the group travels over roads that are long, bumpy, and dusty. We may need to cross rivers in jeeps, wait for landslides to clear, push our vehicles out of sticky spots or make detours. The altitude is high, the food choices are limited, and the group may camp for one night. Hot showers are mostly in Chengdu and toilets on the road are mostly outhouses. The travel is challenging and rewarding! Stamina, patience, and good teamwork are required. Students will learn to become skilled international travelers. Any student with some wilderness experience will feel at home. Photo opportunities are unparalleled.

**For more information and questions please contact Margaret ( Meg) Ferrigno  
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